THE BUSINESS OF BEING LOVED

REYAN ONTO

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About The Author

Reyan Onto is a singer, songwriter, producer, writer, and storyteller from Bangladesh. He is the author of Dedicated to No One, now available on Gumroad. Much of Reyan's life has been shaped by his long battle with panic disorder, a struggle that has quietly followed him through childhood into adulthood.

Despite this, he has released a diverse body of music under several monikers, including **False Correction**, **Reyan Onto**, **Reyan The Rebel**, and **4th Redemption**. His works range from the emotional When She Leaves By Reyan The Rebel to the reflective 4th Redemption – Shwapne Aschi, and the widely loved False Correction – Tmar Asai (Feat. Far).

In 2023, Reyan earned a scholarship and became **the winner of the NAS Academy** Creator Accelerator Program (June Batch). In a country where creative work is often dismissed as impractical, he continued to forge his own path, driven by passion rather than permission. Alongside his music, he has also worked as a freelance video editor for various YouTube channels, shaping stories through visuals as well as sound.

Reyan's journey is one of persistence, creativity, and quiet rebellion—an artist who keeps creating, even when the world tells him not to.

Disclaimer:

This story is a work of complete fiction. Names, characters, places, events, and incidents are products of the author's imagination. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, real events, or locales is purely coincidental. The events depicted in this book are not intended to represent real-life occurrences, and any similarities are unintentional.

Chapter 1 :
The Economics of Attraction

People like to pretend that love is pure. That it's a feeling, a spark, some poetic accident of the universe. But I learned early—love works a lot like business.

No girl falls for a man who earns nothing. Not anymore.

Give a man a luxurious job and suddenly he becomes attractive—handsome, even. The same face, the same body, the same voice… yet a promotion can turn him into someone worth chasing.

And the moment he loses that job? The moment he slips a little in the ladder we call society?

He becomes invisible.

Unwanted.

Ugly.

I've never seen a woman chase a man for who he *is*. I've seen them chase jobs. Chase salaries. Chase the promise of a better lifestyle. They don't fall in love with the man—they fall in love with the opportunities that come with him. And whether anyone admits it or not, women become pets to economies (Even boys in a manner of speaking). Loyal to comfort. Loyal to stability. Loyal to the idea of a safe future.

Of course, not every woman is like that. My father used to tell me love was different in his time. He swore that people used to choose hearts over wallets. He would tell me stories of how he met my mother—how they simply liked each other, how they married despite having almost nothing, how the world criticized them but they didn't care.

That was their time.

This is mine.

Now, if you want women to fall in love with you, you have to pretend you don't care. You have to work yourself to the bone, earn money, stack millions, build your empire. Only then do they turn their heads. Only then do you become someone worth noticing.

I learned this the hard way.

Back in university, the women I liked never liked me back. My father was never wealthy. I topped my classes, scored higher than everyone, became the kid teachers loved bragging about.

But none of that mattered. Education doesn't matter. Talent doesn't matter. Everyone says you just need skills and a good mindset, but that's all podcast garbage.
Out here, jobs come from referrals.

Connections.

Family.

Luck.

And I had none of that.

I've seen people who don't even know how to turn on a computer—not exaggerating—walk into high-salary positions because they knew someone. I've watched women swoon over these men, calling them handsome, treating them like anime heroes, worshipping them only because their wallets were heavy.

Meanwhile, I stayed behind. Graduating with top scores, yet unable to land a single job. Eventually, I ended up helping my father with his work.

What does he do?

My father has spent his whole life working at a graveyard.
I grew up among tombstones, watching people get buried—strangers, children, victims, dreamers… and eventually, my own mother. She died of blood cancer when I was too young to understand what dying meant. Sometimes I wonder if things would've been different if we had money. Would she still be alive? Would treatment have saved her? Would life have been kinder?
But wondering changes nothing.
I couldn't save her.
And that guilt… It stayed with me for twenty-five years.
Now I'm almost twenty-eight. My name is Rifat, and in the grand market of the 21st century, I'm nothing more than a broke, lonely, "ugly" boy trying to survive a world where love is business and business is everything.

I also tried business.
Selling things.
Building something of my own.

But luck has never been on my side. Politics, corruption, the collapsing economy, COVID… every force in the world seemed to rise against me. I spent money I didn't have on advertisements that reached no one. Every attempt at building a future only dug me deeper into debt.

So I did what I always feared—I continued working at the graveyard.

My father was getting older, and I knew, sooner or later, I would become his replacement.
Days blurred into each other: digging, burying, wiping sweat from my face, earning barely enough to survive. In a graveyard, even time feels dead.

Sometimes, we had to bury new bodies over old forgotten graves. If no one visited a grave for years—if a life had been erased from memory—we simply layered the dead on top of the dead. Most of the time, we found nothing below the soil. But there were days we uncovered skulls, ribs, shattered bones… things that haunt a normal person.

Not me.
Not anymore.
A graveyard becomes your home if you stay long enough. Even the dead become familiar.

One evening, I was told to bury an old man. No relatives, no mourners. Just a body wrapped in cloth and handed to me like garbage.
"Bury him anywhere," the men said, tossing a small bundle of money into my palm.

Maybe he was hated. Maybe forgotten. Maybe he simply outlived everyone. I didn't care. Money was money.

I dug the pit. The soil was dry and stubborn. As my shovel hit something solid, I thought it was just another bone from centuries ago.

But it wasn’t a bone.
It was paper.
A rolled piece of parchment, tightly sealed.

At first, I assumed it was a prank. Nobody buries scrolls inside graves—not in my family's graveyard.

The parchment felt ancient. Decayed. The kind of thing that shouldn’t survive underground.

I pocketed it, buried the old man, and took the scroll back to the small shed we used for tools. My “office," if you could even call it that.

When I unrolled it, a strange smell of dust and age hit me. The ink was faded but legible—handwritten in a language that felt old but familiar.

The first line froze me:

“Finally, someone is reading this.
Read carefully. There is treasure waiting for you.”

My heart skipped.
Treasure?
In a graveyard?

Was someone messing with me?
Was my father testing me?
Was this some stupid joke?

But the scroll continued:

“This is one of five scrolls hidden beneath this land.
Follow the instructions.

Complete them all.
You will be rewarded."

The writer claimed to have lived during the medieval age—almost a century ago. A king, or something close to it. A man with wealth, servants, lovers… a man worshipped in his era.

I scoffed, at first.
Who writes like this?
Who buries scrolls under graves?

But then I remembered something:
This graveyard was ancient. Older than the city. Older than the families who owned the land now.

Maybe—just maybe—someone really had buried something here centuries ago.

The scroll told me to find the grave of a man named Yamin.
It even had a map—an awful sketch that looked like it was drawn by a drunk child—but somehow resembled the graveyard I had worked in my whole life.

So I followed it.

Eventually, I found a grave labeled with the names of a mother and child—victims of an accident twenty years ago. Their grave was untouched, unvisited, neglected.

At midnight, I returned with a shovel.
No one visits graveyards at midnight except people like me.

I dug through the soil until I reached their coffins.
Most people would've screamed, fainted, or cried.
But I was raised among the dead.
Fear left me long ago.

If Yamin was buried here centuries ago, his remains would be deeper. So I kept digging. One hour. Two hours. Sweat dripping, hands numb.

Then my shovel hit something round.

A skull.
And inside the skull—glimmering even in the darkness—was gold.

Real gold.
Old coins, heavy and bright, untouched by time.

My breath froze. My hands shook.

This wasn't a prank.
This wasn't a joke.
Someone had buried this intentionally.

Inside the skull was another scroll.

The second one.

My mind raced—fear, curiosity, greed—all tangled into one. I held the skull in one hand, the scroll in the other, and for the first time in my miserable life…

It felt like fate was talking to me.

Chapter 2 :
The Rich Man's Bride

When I think back to my university days, there is one name that still claws at my chest—"Subha".

Subha… She was beautiful in a way that made entire hallways pause for a second. Not the kind of beauty that needed makeup or filters—she just existed differently, like she belonged in a better world than ours.

I liked her.
I liked her far more than I should have.
And for years, I tried to be around her—talk to her, smile at her, help her when she needed something.

I talked about her to my friends too much. I know that now.
Maybe I was stupid. Maybe I was young. Maybe I was just desperate to feel something good for once.

But the more my friends teased, the more Subha turned into someone I didn't recognize.

One afternoon she came storming toward me, eyes sharp, voice trembling with anger.

"Why is your friend talking about us, as if I like you?" she screamed.
"Why are people taking pictures when I talk to you? Why are you telling them things?"

I froze. My mouth went dry.
I told her, again and again, "Subha, I didn't tell anyone to disturb you. They're just my friends. They're idiots sometimes, but it's not me."

She didn't care. Her voice only got louder, sharper, cutting into me like a blade.
She was always mean to me after that—cold, suspicious, impossible to approach.

I wasn't used to being treated like a danger.
I wasn't used to being treated like trash either.
But that was how she looked at me… as if I was something dirty that kept following her shadow.

And then one day, I found out why everything suddenly made sense:
She had a boyfriend.

A rich one.

A guy with wealthy parents, a nice job, the kind of man who could afford to take her to rooftop dinners, buy her expensive perfumes, take her abroad on holidays—things I could never even dream of.
For Subha, I realized, I was never even an option.

Not even by accident.

I looked at how relationships worked around me.
My friends messaged 20 girls—one replied.
Girls got 20 messages—they picked the richest guy.
Then they told their friends, “I didn’t choose him for the money.”
And everyone pretended to believe it.

Romantic dinners.
Trips abroad.
Five-star photos for Instagram.

Women loved to say it was about "feelings," but I knew the truth.
They fell in love with lifestyles, not with faces.

I never had a lifestyle to offer.
Just a heart.

And hearts are worthless in the economy of love.

Years passed.
University ended.
Life got heavier.
Then, earlier tonight (Present day)—after finding that ancient scroll and the gold coins inside a skull—my phone rang.

It was one of my old friends.
He didn’t bother with greetings.

“Rifat… did you hear? Subha is getting married. A big ceremony. The guy’s filthy rich.”

I kept my voice calm.
I said something meaningless—“Oh, good for her”—and hung up.

But when the call ended, I looked at myself in the mirror of the graveyard shed.
My reflection looked like a stranger.
A man covered in grave dirt, sweat, loneliness, and years of being unwanted.

And I felt something burn inside me.
Not love.
Not sadness.

Unfairness.
Why wasn’t I good enough?

Why did my background decide my fate?
Why did poverty decide whom I was allowed to love?

Why could she throw me away so easily—just because I was born on the wrong side of life?

It felt like the whole world was collapsing inside my chest.

So I did something I never thought I'd do.

I took the gold coins—the ones from the skull—and sold them.

The money I got…
it was more than I had ever held in my entire life.

And then something clicked inside me. Something dangerous.
Something hopeful.
Something desperate.

If there are more scrolls…
If there is more treasure…
If I collect everything this ancient king left behind…
maybe—just maybe—I can build a business, an empire…
and finally buy the life I was denied.

Maybe I could even buy the heart I was never allowed to have.

Maybe I could earn enough to make Subha regret ever ignoring me.

And just like that…
my obsession with the scrolls began.

I unrolled the scroll slowly, expecting another cryptic message about gold or hidden treasures. But what I found instead… surprised me.

It told the story of Yamin—the very man whose skull I had been holding moments ago.

Yamin had once served as a royal guard under King Garius. The scroll didn't clearly say who wrote it, but the writer must have been someone close to either the king or Yamin himself. Yamin was described as utterly loyal… the kind of man who followed orders even when they tore him apart from the inside.

One passage described the day the king commanded Yamin to kill his own brother. His brother had apparently been caught stealing something valuable from the palace. And Yamin—bound by duty—executed his own blood with his bare hands. A perfect soldier, the scroll called him. Loyal. Unquestioning. Deadly.

But even perfect soldiers can have flaws.

According to the scroll, the king grew uneasy with Yamin over one particular habit—Yamin was obsessed with reading. He collected books from every corner of the kingdom, spending nearly all his earnings on ancient texts, histories, philosophies, even books predicting futures that had not yet come to pass.

He built an entire private library—his "collection of knowledge," as he called it. He studied civilizations, religions, the rise and fall of men. And with every page he read, something inside him grew sharper, clearer, more aware.

And that was exactly what the king feared.

One day, King Garius arrived at Yamin's library with a group of soldiers. Without warning, they began burning everything—every book, every scroll, every piece of knowledge Yamin had gathered over the years.

When Yamin saw the smoke, he rushed to the scene in panic. He begged the king to stop.
"Please, my king—knowledge is eternal. You must not destroy it. These books hold the future, the past, the guidance of men."

But the king only grew angrier.
"These are lies," he said. "Distractions. Poison meant to drag your loyalty away from me. You are a soldier—nothing more."

Yamin didn't back down. He stood between the flames and the soldiers, desperate.
"These books are not meant to corrupt me. They exist so I can serve you better. So I can understand the world you wish to rule. My king… if you burn my books, it will be the same as killing me."

The king laughed.
"Then so be it."

And before Yamin could react, the king drew his sword and beheaded him.
His body was discarded, and the scroll said he was buried in the very place where I eventually found his skull.

But even after reading all that, one question tore through my mind:
How did I find him?
How did I discover Yamin's location so easily?
How did he leave a map in a time when such things were rare, almost impossible?

The mystery only deepened.
At the very end of the scroll, a final message was written in faded ink:

“If you seek more wealth… find my greatest soldier. His name is Maruf.”

Chapter 3 :
The Message From Beyond The Grave

The scrolls also revealed the location of Maruf. I spent hours tracing the faint lines on the ancient map, trying to make sense of its strange markings. Eventually, I understood. Maruf was buried at the far corner of the graveyard—so far back that most people never even walked there.

When I reached the place, I froze.

There was a grave already there… and it carried my father's name.

Javed.

But ambition has a way of silencing fear.
My mind was still full of Subha, full of wealth, full of the fantasy of rewriting my fate.
I didn't think. I didn't hesitate.

I grabbed the shovel and began to dig.

I dug until my hands burned.
I dug until the soil turned heavy and hollow beneath me.
Finally, the metal of the shovel struck wood.

A coffin.

I pried it open—and instead of treasure, I found a letter resting beside the corpse. It was written by the dead man's son.

"Dear Father,
I'm sorry I couldn't be enough for you."

I stared at it, completely baffled.
Who writes a letter and sends it to a grave?
Who apologizes to a corpse?

I shook my head, shoved the letter aside, and gently pushed the body out of the way. I wasn't there for sentiment. I was there for wealth. For power. For Subha.

So I kept digging.

Deeper beneath that coffin, my shovel struck something again—another box.
Another coffin.

This one was different.
It was dark, almost blackened, and cracked open as if time itself had tried to destroy it. Inside, the body was wrapped in black cloth—perhaps a sign of honor, or fear. Maruf, after all, was said to be the greatest warrior King Garius ever commanded.

I didn't waste time wondering.

I pulled the cloth aside and opened the coffin fully. Maruf's bones were brittle, dull, practically dissolving when I touched them. His hand turned to sand between my fingers.

But something else caught my attention—his skull.
There was a deep opening carved into his forehead, as if someone had pierced him with a blade… or something worse.

And then I opened his jaw.

Inside his skull's mouth lay another scroll—small, cracked, unnerving.
Beside the body, half-buried in the remains, was a golden lamp. Heavy. Ancient. Worth far more than what I had taken from Yamin's grave.

I didn't know what it was, but I knew it meant money.
More than enough to change my life.

So I took everything—the skull, the lamp, whatever treasure I could carry—and buried the grave once again.

Then, under the weight of the night and my own heartbeat, I went back to the place I called my office—my shed—to read Maruf's story.

Whatever waited inside that scroll…
I felt it would change everything.

Maruf.

The name itself carried the weight of violence.

According to the scroll, Maruf was not just one of King Garius's soldiers—he was the hand of death that the king unleashed upon the world. When the king ordered Yamin's execution, it was Maruf who stood beside him, silent and unflinching, watching loyalty die beneath the swing of a sword.

Where Yamin had been loyal yet human, Maruf was something else entirely. He was loyalty stripped of conscience, a beast wrapped in armor. The scroll described him as "the man without mercy." And in those blood-soaked years of Garius's reign, that title was no exaggeration.

Unlike Yamin, Maruf found pleasure in war.
He lived for it.
He thrived in it.

Invading foreign kingdoms became his sport. Entire villages burned beneath his command. He slaughtered men by the hundreds, cut down children without hesitation, and burned homes with the laughter of a man who believed he was doing the world a favor.

But his cruelty didn't stop with the blade.
The scroll darkened as it went on.

Whenever a village fell, Maruf gathered all the surviving women—mothers, daughters, widows—and brought them back to the capital. He built a fortress that the writer described as "the house of his wives," though it was nothing more than a vast prison.

Every woman he captured, he called his bride. Every tear, every scream, he silenced with the delusion that he was saving them.

He claimed the women of the villages had lived miserable, hungry lives—that under his rule, they were fed, clothed, and protected. To him, this was kindness. To them, it was captivity.

Even King Garius, whose cruelty was legend, found amusement in Maruf's twisted logic.
"The beast believes himself a savior," the king once said, laughing as fires burned in the distance. "What a fine kind of monster I've created."

But Maruf's reign of terror did not last forever.

The scroll spoke of one woman—Eliza.

She was not like the others.
She did not bow.
She did not cry.
And she did not break.

Eliza had watched her husband die by Maruf's hand. She had seen her child fall lifeless beside him. And yet, when she was thrown into Maruf's fortress, she did not surrender. She stared at him with the kind of hatred that could outlive centuries.

Maruf, for the first time in his life, was unsettled.
Every time he tried to command her, she defied him.
Every time he tried to own her, she reminded him he owned nothing.
And perhaps, deep inside that monstrous chest, Maruf admired her defiance—even if he would never admit it.

But Eliza had no admiration left in her heart.
Only fire.

One night, as Maruf removed his armor and tried to have his way with her, Eliza acted.
From his own chestplate, she pulled a dagger—his dagger—and drove it straight into his forehead.

The blade split his skull where the mark of arrogance had always been.

The scroll said that Maruf didn't scream. He just smiled—a faint, broken smile—as if he finally understood something at the edge of death.
He died believing he had done nothing wrong.
He died thinking he had saved the women from poverty, from hunger, from the pain of being ordinary.

But Eliza didn't stay to watch him decay.
She escaped.

She slipped through the cracks of his empire, gathered the remnants of the ruined villages, and built something new—an army of women who had nothing left to lose.

And thus began the whispers of Eliza's Rebellion—a storm born from blood and vengeance.

At the end of the scroll, written in trembling ink, were the final words:

"If you seek more than gold, seek Eliza.
She is where the dead still weep."

Chapter 4 :
Eliza's grave

There Rifat stood — sweat dripping from his forehead, mud clinging to his boots — staring at the massive tree that towered over Eliza's grave. Its roots curled into the earth like veins protecting a buried secret.

He sighed, gripping his chainsaw. Why does it always have to be this hard? he thought bitterly. "All this gold, and now I have to chop down a damn tree," he muttered. Without hesitation, the engine roared to life, and the blade tore into the bark. Woodchips scattered like ash in the air, and the sound echoed across the quiet graveyard.

When the last fragment of the trunk crashed onto the ground, Rifat began digging—deeper and deeper, his shovel biting through the damp soil. His thoughts drifted as he worked.

Why did Eliza return here? She could've escaped—lived a peaceful life somewhere far away. But no. She came back to fight, to lead a rebellion against King Garius. Rifat couldn't decide if she was brave or foolish. Still, he felt something close to admiration. Maybe some people are just born to burn for something bigger than themselves, he thought.

He was almost through the roots when a voice cut through the silence.

"Rifat… what the hell are you doing?"

He froze. Slowly, he turned around. His father stood behind him, eyes wide with disbelief.

Moments later, they were both inside the office. The old ceiling fan creaked above as his father's voice thundered across the room.

"Have you gone mad? Digging up graves now? The neighbors are complaining — they say they hear noises at night! Sounds of digging, screaming, demons! Rifat, what is happening to you? Your mother and I raised you better than this!"

Rifat clenched his fists. "Father, listen. I found gold — a lot of it. It was buried in the graves. Look!" He opened a cloth bag, revealing glimmering coins and ornaments.

His father's eyes widened. "Where did you get this?"

“I told you — from the graves. I found a century old scroll, and it led me to more scrolls. Each one led to more treasure. These stories... they were all real.”

His father frowned. “Do you even hear yourself? These are centuries-old legends, Rifat. How could you even read those scrolls? They wouldn’t be in our language. This doesn’t make any sense.”

Rifat shook his head. “If you don’t believe me, here — see for yourself.” He handed over the ancient scrolls.

His father unrolled them carefully, squinting under the dim light. Then his expression changed.

“Rifat…” his father whispered, voice trembling. “There’s nothing written on these.”

Rifat’s heart sank. “What are you talking about? Look—”

He snatched one of the scrolls back. But as his eyes scanned the parchment, his blood ran cold.

The ink was gone. Every line, every word, every trace of the story had vanished.

The scrolls were blank.

Rifat’s breath trembled as he stared at the blank scrolls. The parchment, once full of words and legends, now looked like nothing but empty skin. His heart raced — and then anger replaced confusion.

“Well,” he said, his voice cracking, “it doesn’t matter if the scrolls are blank or not. The gold is real, right?”

He stepped closer to his father, eyes burning. “I’m actually finding real money — gold that can change our lives! Why can’t you just be proud of me for once? Why are you always disappointed in me? Why am I never good enough for you, huh?”

His father, Javed, opened his mouth to speak — but no words came. His face twisted in pain. He stumbled backward, clutching his chest.

“F-Father?”

Javed’s fingers dug into his shirt, his breath short and sharp. “R-Rifat…” was all he managed to say before collapsing onto the cold floor.

“Father!” Rifat shouted, dropping to his knees. He shook him, panic rising like fire in his throat. “Father! Stay with me! Please!”

He grabbed his phone, called for an ambulance, and somehow managed to carry his father out to the street. The sirens screamed through the night. But deep down, Rifat already knew.

At the hospital, a doctor stepped out, his expression heavy. “I’m sorry,” he said quietly. “Your father was gone before you even got here. It happens sometimes… at his age, the heart just gives out. Maybe it was simply his time.”

The words hit Rifat like stones. He nodded weakly, his mind numb. The gold, the scrolls, the graveyard — everything suddenly felt meaningless.

The next day passed in a blur. Relatives came and went — some offering words of comfort, others whispering behind his back. But when it came time to bury Javed, Rifat made a single request.

“I appreciate everyone’s concern,” he said softly. “But… I want to do this alone. My father worked in that graveyard his whole life. It’s only right that I bury him there — with my own hands.”

There was silence for a moment. Then one of the elders spoke up, his voice trembling with respect. “If that’s your wish, son, we’ll honor it. Just… bury the man properly. And remember — your father raised you to be a good man.”

That night, under a pale half-moon, Rifat stood alone in the graveyard — shovel in hand — ready to bury his father where the dead whispered and the earth still remembered.

Midnight hung over the graveyard like a heavy curse. The wind was still, the stars hidden behind clouds. Rifat stood beside the freshly dug hole that was meant for his father — shovel in hand, face pale in the moonlight.

But before he could lay his father to rest, something darker stirred inside him. The thought came quietly, like a whisper in the back of his mind.

The gold… there’s still more.

His eyes drifted toward Eliza’s grave — the one he’d marked earlier. The one the scrolls had spoken of.

Rifat exhaled slowly. “I’ll bury Father later,” he muttered to himself. “He’ll understand. I need the gold now. This could change everything.”

He dropped his father’s shovel beside the empty grave and made his way through the rows of tombstones. The earth crunched beneath his boots. When he reached Eliza’s resting place, he didn’t hesitate. He started digging.

The soil was soft, as if it had been turned over many times before. His shovel struck bone — a dull clack that echoed through the night. He frowned, brushed away the dirt, and froze.

A skull. Then another. And another.

There were dozens of them — men, women, maybe even children. Eliza's grave wasn't a grave at all; it was a pit of forgotten souls.

Rifat's hands trembled. "What… what is this place?" he whispered. But even as fear clawed at him, his ambition pressed harder. "No. The gold has to be here."

He kept digging. The deeper he went, the darker the soil became, until it felt wet, like blood-soaked clay. And then —

Crack.

The sound came from below — sharp, sudden, and unmistakably from the ground. Rifat's heart skipped a beat. He froze, the shovel in midair.

"Did I… hear something?" he whispered to himself. It sounded like splintering wood, like something breaking open.

For a moment, he thought about stopping. But then he remembered Subha's wedding — how everyone would look at him with pity, how poor Rifat never amounted to anything.

"No," he muttered. "Not again."

He dug faster. Harder. Until the ground seemed to pulse under his hands.

And then — it happened.

A hand — pale, thin, and cold as the dead — shot up from the soil and clamped around his wrist.

Rifat screamed and stumbled backward, dropping the shovel. The ground trembled. The soil split open like a wound.

From beneath, a figure rose — draped in tattered remains of armor and dirt-stained cloth. Its eyes glowed faintly, burning with something between rage and recognition.

It smiled — a crooked, horrifying grin that made Rifat's blood run cold.

"I finally found you," the thing said, its voice like gravel and echo. "Or should I say… you finally found me."

Chapter 4 :
The Man Who Mocked The Devil

Rifat stumbled backward, his heart pounding so violently it drowned out the wind. The thing — the man — stepped out of the grave, dragging behind him the stench of centuries. His armor was rusted, his cloak torn and caked in dirt. But his eyes — his eyes burned like molten gold, alive and ancient.

“Who… who are you?” Rifat gasped.

The figure didn’t answer. Instead, he reached forward, his hand like iron, and wrapped it around Rifat’s throat. With inhuman strength, he lifted him off the ground, dragging him from the grave as if he weighed nothing.

Rifat’s vision blurred. His feet kicked against the air. The man’s breath was cold — colder than death.

Then he spoke, voice deep and cruel, echoing through the night like thunder in a tomb.

“I am King Garius,” he said. “The one who has waited all this time to be resurrected.”

He hurled Rifat aside. The young man hit the ground hard, coughing and gasping for air. Dirt filled his mouth, but he could finally breathe again.

King Garius stepped forward, towering over him. “It wasn’t a coincidence that you found me, Rifat,” he said. “I knew someone like you would be born — one day — in the future. A man just as corrupt as I once was. As violent. As hungry.”

Rifat looked up at him, trembling.

“The earth,” Garius continued, his voice rising, “never learns to make good men. It only breeds ambition. And ambition, Rifat, is the seed of evil. Evil runs the world. Evil shapes it. Evil is what I am…”

He leaned closer, a smile twisting his decayed lips. “…and evil is what you are.”

Rifat shook his head violently. “You’re insane! I—I’m not like you!”

“Oh, but you are.” The king’s laughter rolled through the graveyard, low and menacing. “Yes, my hands are stained with blood — but if you had the chance, you’d have done the same. As proof, look around you. You desecrated graves for gold. You played with the dead. You sold your soul for treasure that doesn’t even belong to you.”

Rifat’s breath quickened. His mind screamed that this was impossible — a nightmare, a hallucination — yet every word felt too real, too sharp to ignore.

“In a sense,” the king said, pacing around him, “you are forever doomed — like me. But unlike you, I am immortal. I have waited for centuries for someone to unearth my tomb. Someone to pick up that cursed skull and free me.”

He stopped and turned to Rifat, his gaze like fire. “And it was you — the most greedy, desperate man I’ve ever known.”

Rifat’s mouth quivered. “I don’t understand… how are you still alive? You— you died centuries ago! The story— it’s ancient! How can you even speak my language?”

The king’s grin widened. “Language changes, Rifat. Evil does not. It adapts. It whispers. It finds new tongues to speak through. You hear me now because your soul already belongs to me.”

The wind picked up — cold, furious, and filled with whispers that didn’t sound human. The graves around them trembled. Somewhere far off, a dog howled — then fell silent.

Rifat backed away, his voice cracking. “No… no, this isn’t real. You can’t be real!”

King Garius spread his arms wide, the night bending around him like smoke.

“Oh, I am very real,” he said softly. “And now, so are you.”

Rifat stumbled to his feet, his voice echoing across the silent graveyard.
“How is this possible?” he shouted, rage and fear bleeding through his words. “How did you do this? How are you still alive? How are you immortal? People are born, people live, people die — that’s how the world works! You shouldn’t even exist!”

King Garius smiled — the kind of smile that made the moon itself seem to retreat behind the clouds.
“Well, you see, Rifat,” he began, his tone almost gentle, “peasants like you are born and peasants like you die. That is the order of your kind. But a king such as myself… I do not die. Death does not come for me. Death only hunts the poor, the weak, the sick. I am none of those things.”

He stepped closer, his boots sinking into the loose soil, the faint glow from his eyes illuminating his scarred face.
“I don’t get sick,” he said. “And I don’t die.”

Rifat’s throat tightened as the king continued, his voice turning darker, more venomous with each word.

“You see, one of my soldiers — Maruf — had a favorite little pet, didn’t he? That fiery woman, Eliza.” He almost spat the name. “She built herself a rebellion, gathered a few pitiful kings from across the lands, and dared to rise against me. And to my dismay… that little witch actually won.”

He paused, his voice trembling with both fury and amusement.
“She slaughtered every one of my armies. Every soldier, every guard — even Maruf’s dogs. And then she came for me.”

Garius’s eyes gleamed with a twisted pride.
“She stabbed me through the skull — right here.” He tapped the scar running across his forehead. “My head split open, blood pouring down my face… and I laughed. I laughed so loud the walls trembled. The sight terrified them — Eliza, her men, her allies. They screamed that I was no man, but a demon.”

He spread his arms as if reliving the moment.
“They bound me in chains. Built a coffin. Buried me so deep that even the worms couldn’t find me. Yes, I was frightened at first. But I knew. I knew that someday, someone like you would find me. A man with enough greed, enough darkness in his heart.”

He took a step closer until Rifat could see his reflection in the king’s burning eyes.
“They erased me from history, Rifat. They burned every trace of my existence. If they hadn’t, you’d have grown up memorizing my name, worshipping my reign. I would have been a legend. But instead…” His voice lowered to a growl. “…they buried me with their own sins.”

Rifat swallowed hard. “Okay… but some of what you’re saying doesn’t make sense,” he stammered. “How could you have known what happened after you were buried? How could you know what Eliza or the others did after you were gone? That doesn’t add up.”

For a moment, silence filled the graveyard. Then Garius began to laugh. It wasn’t the laughter of a man — it was something inhuman, guttural, echoing like thunder in an endless pit.

He raised his hands toward the black sky.

“Hear me, oh Devil — my master!” he roared. “Hear me, for I have called you! I am back, and I am here to entertain you once more!”

The ground shuddered violently. Every candlelight from the nearby graves flickered and died. The night fell into total darkness — so absolute that Rifat couldn’t even see his own hands.

Then came the sound — a tearing, like the heavens themselves were being ripped open. Rifat looked up.

The sky had split apart. From within the rift, something enormous began to descend — writhing, shifting, impossible to define. It wasn’t a creature born of flesh, nor spirit, nor nightmare. Its form bent the air around it, like reality itself was trying to reject its presence.

The thing looked down at Garius and began to laugh — a sound that wasn’t laughter at all, but a chorus of screams twisted into one.

And Rifat, frozen in horror, realized something unthinkable:
this was not just a monster.
It was the very thing that Garius had served all along.

The ground trembled beneath Rifat's feet as the sky split open like torn fabric. Darkness spilled out — thick, crawling, suffocating.
From the rift above, something enormous began to descend — a creature without form, yet heavier than any shadow. It had eyes, if they could be called that, swirling like molten obsidian. The air bent around it. The night bent around it.

Rifat's mind screamed one word: Run.

He did. He sprinted as fast as he could — through fog, through dirt, through the same broken gravestones. But no matter where he turned, he found himself running past King Garius again and again, circling the same spot like a trapped moth around a dying flame. Panic clawed through his lungs. There was no escape.

"Do you now see the power of a king?" Garius thundered. "Do you see how helpless you are? You are nothing but a pawn in my story!"

Rifat dropped to his knees, clutching his head. The world was spinning — the laughter of the entity, the taunts of the immortal king — all blending into one nightmare symphony. He could barely breathe.
But then… a thought cut through the noise.

If Garius was once human — if he could bleed, feel fear, be buried — then he was no god. He was just another man who wanted too much.
And if Rifat shared that same greed… maybe he could use it against him.

He took a long, trembling breath. His heart slowed. He remembered something from a time when the world still made sense — a lesson, a joke, a bit of human logic. And with a grin crawling back to his lips, Rifat looked up.

"You know," he said, his voice steady now, "for a king, you really have the IQ of a dog."

Garius froze. "What did you say to me?"

"I said," Rifat smirked, "you're an idiot."

The king's eyes blazed crimson. "How dare you mock me! I have lived ten thousand lifetimes! You're a child in comparison!"

"Yeah, maybe," Rifat said. "But I went to university. My grades were pretty high. And I can recognize an idiot when I see one — especially one who probably got his job through referrals."

“Referrals?” Garius repeated, confused. “What do you mean? Job? What nonsense—”

“Oh, you wouldn’t understand,” Rifat interrupted, standing tall now. “You cheated your way through life. You served this... thing.”
He gestured — but didn’t dare look — toward the monstrous entity hovering above them.
“You’ve been entertaining it for centuries like some cosmic clown. You’re not a king, Garius. You’re just a side character in someone else’s Video game.”

“Video Game?” The word hissed out of Garius’s mouth like steam.

Rifat finally forced himself to look up. His eyes met the swirling gaze of the creature above — an impossible act of courage and terror fused together. His entire body trembled, but his voice did not.

“You,” Rifat shouted at the entity. “You want entertainment, don’t you? You’ve been watching this idiot dig in the mud for centuries. Is that fun for you? Really? He’s boring. He’s predictable. He’s old news.”

The sky rumbled, low and amused — the sound of thunder shaped like laughter.

“You want a story worth watching?” Rifat went on. “Then end this one. You know how every story truly becomes great? When it ends. So let me end it. Let me end him. Let me be your new piece. Let me be the one who entertains you.”

The ground shook. The creature’s laughter deepened until the whole world quivered like glass. Garius suddenly gasped — his body cracking, flesh peeling like paper. He fell to his knees, eyes wide with terror.

“No… no! My lord, not me! I’ve served you—”

His scream turned into a wet gargle. His power was gone.

Rifat smiled. “Guess even kings get fired sometimes.”

He reached for the chainsaw — the same one he’d used earlier to cut down a tree. He pulled the cord. The machine roared to life, its metal teeth glinting in the unholy light.

Garius crawled backward. “Please! Rifat! I’ll serve you! I’ll be your slave—”

“Kill you?” Rifat repeated, stepping closer. “I thought kings don’t die.”

“Please! I—”

Rifat tilted his head, eyes sharp as glass. “You called me greedy. Maybe I am not. There’s one difference between us, you little piece of shit.”

He raised the chainsaw, its growl rising like a scream.

“You’re greedy… but I’m ambitious.”

The blade came down in a flash of red and steel.
The king’s head rolled onto the earth — crownless, powerless, silent.

The laughter above faded into the distance, like thunder receding beyond the clouds. The darkness peeled away. Dawn crept slowly over the graves.

Rifat stood there, shaking, covered in blood and dirt, breathing like a man who’d just wrestled the devil and lived to tell the tale.

He looked at the severed head one last time and whispered,
“Long live the king.”
“Eat shit, you disgusting over expired dog.”

Chapter 5 :
Devil In The Form Of A Bastard

The entity was gone.

The graveyard, once split by shadows and screams, slowly began to mend itself. The air turned still again. The whispering wind quieted. The graves looked ordinary—just soil, stone, and silence.

Rifat stood in the center of it all, staring at the place where the monster had vanished. The sky above him was clear, as if nothing had ever happened.

He didn't speak. He simply knelt down beside his father's body and began to dig.
No demons. No kings. No voices from the ground—only the sound of his shovel cutting through the cold earth. He buried his father with care, then buried the remains of King Garius right beside him, in the very same spot where he had first found him.

It took him the whole night.

When he finally finished, dawn broke over the horizon. Rifat's hands were blistered, his clothes soaked in dirt and sweat. He walked home without a word, stepped into the shower, and let the water wash the blood and soil off his body. For the first time in days, he looked at himself in the mirror.

He stared at the reflection—the tired eyes, the trembling fingers, the hollow breath. Then he said quietly to himself,

> "All of this… it's enough to change a man. Enough to forget greed. Enough to forget everything."

He paused. His reflection smirked back at him.

> "But there's one problem," he whispered.
> "I'm ambitious. And I'm still alive."

He turned around—
His office was filled with gold.

Stacks upon stacks of gold bars and ancient ornaments shimmered under the faint light. Gold that came from the grave of a king… and the soldiers buried beside him. The riches of centuries were

now his. Rifat didn't scream. He didn't even smile. He simply walked forward, ran his hand over the treasure, and sighed.

He had killed a monster. But somewhere inside him, another monster had taken root—one that breathed ambition, and a hunger far colder than Garius ever possessed.
Whether that monster was good or evil, no one could say. Perhaps it was simply *human.*

Days turned into weeks.
Weeks into months.

Rifat's name began to echo through the city. His business grew faster than anyone could imagine. Factories, showrooms, offices—all under his name. He became one of the richest men in the country, and with wealth came influence, fame, and power.

One afternoon, dressed in a tailored suit and wearing a quiet smile, Rifat drove to Subha's house. The same Subha who once refused him—the girl he had watched from afar while dreaming of something more.

When she opened the door, she smiled softly and said,

> "Why is a famous, wealthy, and handsome man at my doorstep?"

Rifat chuckled. "Well," he said, "I realized it was time I settled down. And with all this money and fame, I could have anyone I want. But the truth is… the only girl I ever wanted was you.
If you'll have me, we can get married right now. Move to another country. Go anywhere you wish. Whatever you desire—I'll give it to you."

Subha blushed and laughed. Perhaps it was love, or perhaps it was the gleam of wealth in his eyes—but she said yes.

They married soon after.
A grand ceremony. Expensive lights. The whole city came to see the man who turned rags into gold.

That night, Rifat stood alone in front of a mirror once again. He looked at his reflection in his wedding suit and began to laugh.
It was a strange laugh—neither joyous nor sad, not human nor monstrous. It was the sound of someone who had seen the edge of darkness and decided to live with it.

Was it the laugh of a man who had conquered evil?
Or the laugh of a man who had become it?

No one could tell. No one ever would.

Some questions are beyond answers.
Was it right to buy love with money?
Is that truly how the world works?

Perhaps not.
But one truth remained—

> The wealthy have ways to cheat life.
> And sometimes, that's all it takes to win.

Disclaimer:
This story is a work of complete fiction. All names, characters, places, events, and incidents are born entirely from the imagination of the author. Any resemblance to real people, living or dead, real events, or locations is purely coincidental. The dark deeds, ambitions, and supernatural events depicted within these pages are fictional and should not be taken as reflections of reality. Enter this story at your own risk, for what unfolds here exists only in the world of imagination.

Some legends are best left forgotten.
Rifat thought he was chasing gold, but what he uncovers in the shadows of an ancient graveyard changes everything. Secrets of kings, monsters, and power that defies death draw him into a game far larger than himself—one where ambition can awaken the past, and every choice could be his last.
In a world where greed meets darkness, how far would you go to claim what you desire?

Genre: Cosmic Horror / Thriller / Science Fiction / Disturbing